

REMARKS

New independent claim 41 has been added. This claim further includes a frame engagement member comprising a detent extending from a lower surface of the screening or diverting member for readily and interlockingly mounting the screening or diverting member onto the frame.

Claims 1-3, 5-17, 20-23, 25-37 and 40 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Giles, et al. This rejection is traversed for the reasons set forth below.

Anticipation under 35 U.S.C. 102 (e) requires that every element of the invention be found in a single prior art reference. Clearly, this is not the case with respect to the Giles, et al reference.

Giles, et al is directed to a screen deck assembly which has a locking system for retaining a plurality of screen panels. The Giles, et al system is very similar in design to the Tabor system which was discussed in detail in the prior filed Amendment. Most of the differences between the claimed module and method, and that of the Tabor system, are again manifested in the system of Giles, et al.

The Giles, et al system has a screening surface which is formed of a "non-unitary structure". It is also "multi-level" in design. The Giles, et al screen member is defined by (a) a first non-unitary element comprising rows of spaced apart steel profile wires 22, which is held in laterally spaced relation to each other which are welded to (b) a second non-unitary element comprising transverse support rods 24 located at a different level below the profile wires 22. The supporting-locking system of Giles, et al comprises several non-unitary elements. There are (c) pairs of elongated retainer bars 18 located at a different level between longitudinal rows of modular screen sections. The retaining bars 18 support the rods 24. Further support and interlocking of the Giles, et al system is provided by (d) sleeves 30 and (e) locking pins 32. Each retainer bar 18 receives and retains corresponding ends of the transverse support rods 24 in a plurality of modular screen sections. Elements 18, 32, 30 are capture the ends of the panel (22 and 24) instead of surrounding the screening element as in the module of applicants.

Gilles is a system which has screens that are profile wires 22 and support rods 24 welded together. They are not modules that are fit together, preferably snap fit, to form a screening system. This means their system is a unit, their screening media and support frame are welded as a unit, unlike the subject modules in which the screening module and support frame are independent items and can be easily changed independent of each other. This cannot be done with the Gilles system. Also Gilles cannot remove the screen panel without removing pins 32, sleeves 30, and retainer bars 18 to get to the screen panel. The system of the claimed invention allow removal of the modules without removing anything else.

The Giles, et al system is a non-unitary structure including the individual components (a)-(c) described above, which is held in place by (d) sleeves 30 and (e) locking pins. Furthermore, all of the components (a)-(e) form a multi-level construction when the system of Giles, et al is actually arranged into a screening system.

Giles, et al does not teach or suggest the module of the present invention, or the method of producing same, which is set forth in independent claims 1, 21 and 41, and in the claims dependent therefrom. More specifically, claims 1-3, 5-17, 20-23, 25-37, 40 and 41 comprise a screening member having a unitary, single-level structure including an array of sieve apertures of a predetermined size defined therein for allowing particulate material up to the predetermined size to pass through the module or a diverting member having a unitary, single-level structure for redirecting the flow path of the said particulate material. Clearly, this is not a non-unitary structure including the individual components (a)-(e) as described above in Giles, et al. Moreover, none of the features set forth in the claims depending from claims 1 and 21, each of which forms an integral part of the unitary, single-level structure of the subject invention, can be found in Giles, et al. Claim 41 further includes a frame engagement member comprising a detent extending from a lower surface of the screening or diverting member for readily and interlockingly mounting the screening or diverting member onto the frame.

Giles, et al, also does not comprise snap-fit engagement with posts (claims 2 and 22), post engagement members connected at a plurality of corners (claims 3 and 23), or a gripping surface of engaging a complementary gripping surface on an a frame (claims 5 and 25), or a detent member (claims 8 and 28), or the portion of the screening member defining the array of sieves formed of a polymeric material (claims 9 and 29), or a detent member having a

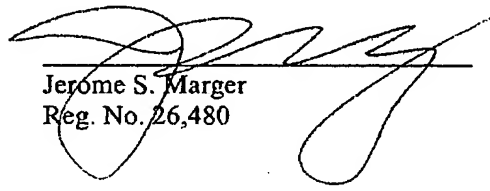
locking tab (claims 10 and 30), or a module which is placed over the reinforcing support frame so that the frame engagement member extends along inwardly facing surfaces of the reinforcing support frame (claims 11 and 31), or a module wherein each locking tab engages the reinforcing support frame (claims 12 and 32), or frame engagement members comprising substantially planar extensions having inwarding and outwarding facing sides (claims 14 and 34), or a detent member including a gripping surface for engaging a complementary gripping surface on an engagement surface of said frame (claims 15 and 35), or screening or diverting member defining a plurality of receptacles, each receptacle receiving and retaining a portion of each of the posts (claims 16 and 36), or screening or diverting member including a frame engagement member extending from a lower surface thereof for readily and interlockably mounting said module onto at least one frame (claims 17 and 37), or a gripping surface on the detent member located along its outwardly facing side (claims 20 and 40).

In summary, for the reasons set forth above, the Giles, et al reference does not anticipate the invention set forth in claims 1-3, 5-17, 20-23, 25-37, 40 and 41.

The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned Attorney for Applicants at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,

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